# DR. SQUIRE's SERMON

BEFORE THE HONOURABLE

# HOUSE OF COMMONS.

*Lunæ*, 16° *Die Februarii*, 1761.

ORDERED,

THAT the Thanks of this Houſe be given to the Reverend Doctor Squire, Dean of Briſtol, for the Sermon by him preached upon Friday laſt, before this Houſe, at Saint Margaret's, Weſtminſter; and that he be deſired to print the ſame; and that Mr. Charleton, Mr. Weſt, Mr. Jarrit Smith, and Mr. Samuel Martin, do acquaint him therewith.

J. DYSON, CL. DOM. COM.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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A

# SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE HONOURABLE

# HOUSE OF COMMONS,

AT

St. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER,

On FRIDAY, FEBRUARY, 13, 1761.

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED

By His MAJESTY's Proclamation,

FOR A

GENERAL FAST and HUMILIATION.

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BY S. SQUIRE, D. D.

DEAN OF BRISTOL.

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LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. HUGHS, NEAR LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS,

For J. WALTER, at Homer's-Head,

Charing-Cross. 1761.

A

# SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE HONOURABLE

# HOUSE OF COMMONS,

AT

ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER,

On Friday, the 30th of January, 1795.

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED

By His MAJESTY'S Proclamation,

FOR A

GENERAL FAST and HUMILIATION.

By S. SQUIRE, D. D.

DEAN of ST. ASAPH.

LONDON:

Printed by J. NICHOLS, and Son, Red Lion Passage, Fleet Street.

For J. WALTER, at Charing-Cross.

MVSEVM BRITANNICVM

A

# SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE HONOURABLE

## HOUSE OF COMMONS, &c.

### PSALM xviii. VERSE 3.

I WILL CALL UPON THE LORD, WHO IS WORTHY TO BE PRAISED: SO SHALL I BE SAVED FROM MINE ENEMIES.

"BLOW the trumpet in Zion, ſanctify a faſt, "proclaim a ſolemn aſſembly. Let us call upon "the Lord in our diſtreſs; let us humble our- "ſelves under the afflicting hand of Providence; let us "pour out our ſupplications to the Almighty God of "Jacob, confeſſing our ſins before him; let us ceaſe to "do evil, and learn to do well."

SUCH was the devout practice of the King of Iſrael and his people, when the judgements of God threatened them; when the enemy had ſet themſelves in array againſt them; when the ſorrows of death had compaſſed them about, and the floods of ungodly men had made them afraid.

NOR was the event of their reſignation to the will of God unfavourable to their higheſt hopes and expectations. For the Lord himſelf, we are told, was their ſtrong rock and defence; he bleſſed their preparations for war; he went forth with their hoſts to battle, and he taught their hands to war, and their fingers to fight. *They called upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praiſed, and ſo were they ſaved from their enemies.*

WITH great wiſdom, therefore, in our preſent ſituation, are we exhorted by our pious Sovereign (ever attentive to the ſolid and eſſential intereſts of his people), *to ſend up our ſupplications and prayers to the univerſal Parent, the Almighty King of Heaven and Earth, for obtaining pardon of our ſins, and for averting thoſe heavy judgements, which our manifold provocations have juſtly deſerved.*

IN our preſent ſituation, therefore, with great propriety are we called upon, *to implore with united hearts*

*and voices the Divine Bleſſing and Aſſiſtance upon his Majeſty's Arms by ſea and land, and for reſtoring and perpetuating peace, ſafety, and proſperity, both to him and his dominions.*

And do thou, O Lord God moſt wiſe! O Lord moſt mighty! O holy and benevolent Saviour! accept with favour the ſupplications of thy ſervants, and make haſte to help us. Thou, Lord, art acquainted with all our wants, nor are our weakneſſes hidden from Thee! Shut not thy merciful ears to our prayers! But ſpare us, thou worthy Judge eternal! Let thine eyes be open upon this kingdom, to deliver it from the machinations of its enemies, to maintain its cauſe, and to forgive this people, who have ſinned againſt Thee!

Thus far have we certainly done right. For by calling upon God in the day of our trouble, by pouring out our hearts in prayer before his throne, by committing our cauſe to his mercy and goodneſs, and by humbly looking up to him for ſtrength, relief, and deliverance—we have imitated the example of the wiſeſt and beſt people of all ages; we have followed the precepts of our holy religion, and we have acted like what we are, reaſonable and dependent beings, conſcious of our own inability to deliver ourſelves, and taking refuge for our ſalvation in the divine ſufficiency.

Nor will the divine ſufficiency diſappoint the warmeſt promiſes of ſucceſs, which we can make ourſelves, if our faith in God, and our zeal for his true religion, be as earneſt, and ſincere, as the bleſſings, we pray for, are great, extenſive and intereſting.

For the God whom we adore, the God, who ſo frequently delivered the repenting ſons of Jacob and Joſeph from the hands of their enemies, is not the God of David, and of the Hebrews only; but he is the Father of all mankind, and the juſt Governor of the univerſe. He is the eternal God, whoſe laws are unchangeable; he is the God who is ever the ſame, eſſentially righteous in all his ways, wiſe in all his councils, and holy in all his works.

The goodneſs of this God, his care and protection have been frequently, and abundantly experienced, by this favoured nation.—Our grateful fathers have told us, in their faithful annals, the mighty things which Thou didſt for them in ancient times; and our own exulting eyes have viewed, with aſtoniſhment viewed, the wonderful works which Thou haſt done for us, both yeſterday and to-day. Thou haſt turned our darkneſs into light, our ſorrow into joy, our mourning into triumph. Thou haſt filled our garners with all manner of ſtores: Our oxen are, again, ſtrong to labour, and our ſheep bring forth thouſands

ſands and ten thouſands in our fruitful fields. Thou haſt crowned our year with thy goodneſs, and our clouds have dropped fatneſs. It is well ſeen, O God, how thou goeſt! how, Thou, our beſt guide and defence, goeſt forth with our fleets and armies! Animated by thy protection we have as vigorouſly executed, as we wiſely planned, and bravely dared. See our commercial veſſels covering the ocean with their canvaſs, and unloading the riches of the world in our ports, with almoſt the ſame ſecurity as in a time of profound peace! See our triumphant fleets and armies filling the extremities of the globe with the renown of their victories! As far as the Eaſt is from the Weſt, as far as the North is from the South, ſo far have the ſplendor of the Britiſh wiſdom, and the efforts of Britiſh courage extended their illuſtrious effects.

But though we ſee with gratitude, and with thankful voices acknowledge, that God has been exceedingly gracious to this land, and has done more for it already, than it has deſerved: yet with trembling hearts do we alſo ſee, that much ſtill remains to be done for us, before we can expect the renovation and ſtability of that ſovereign bleſſing, which is the laſt object of all our prayers, councils, and military preparations.

The race, we know, is not always with the ſwift, nor the battle with the ſtrong. The bloody ſword ſtill hangs unſheathed

unſheathed over our careful heads; the conſuming war ſtill ravages the countries of our allies, more than threatning the wretched inhabitants with all the accumulated horror, devaſtation, and ruin, of inſolent, deſperate and lawleſs invaders. The ſtrength of our fields, and the pride of our looms, are continually periſhing by the edge of the ſword, and falling a ſacrifice to the ceaſeleſs fatigues of a military life, under ſkies unwholeſome, and in regions barbarous and inhoſpitable. And the ſtill-increaſing expences even of victory, how!--------

But let no words of ill omen drop from us! We are in thy hands, O God, and to Thee do we recommend ourſelves and our cauſe! Upon Thee, our ſtrength, our hope and confidence, do we call for aſſiſtance! O ſave us from all our enemies!

But God, we have too much reaſon to apprehend, will neither hear our prayers, nor ſave us from our enemies, unleſs our petitions are addreſſed to him in ſpirit and in truth, and ſanctified, as it were, with humility, fervor, and perſeverance. To have a well-grounded expectation of ſucceſs, when we call upon the Lord, there muſt be a conſiſtency between our words and actions.

We muſt forſake, repent of and abhor, thoſe ſins, which we confeſs to have juſtly provoked the Almighty,

and

and to have drawn our diſtreſſes upon us. We muſt be conſtant in the future performance of our moral and religious duties; and to our earneſt prayers for reſtoring and perpetuating peace, ſafety and proſperity, to his Majeſty and his kingdoms, we muſt add our beſt and continued endeavours to promote the good and neceſſary work. We muſt be as active to ſerve ourſelves in every way, which wiſdom can ſuggeſt and courage execute, as we are warm, faithful and aſſiduous, in our devotions.

For can there be a more ſolemn mockery of the Divine Being, whom we acknowledge to be of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, than to aſk for pardon and forgiveneſs of our ſins, whilſt we wilfully and preſumptuouſly perſiſt in them? And can there be a conduct more abſurd and unreaſonable, than to expect, that God will hear the voice of the lazy, idle, and indolent petitioner, and do every thing to ſerve him, who will do nothing to the purpoſe to ſerve himſelf? The utmoſt, we muſt preſume to hope for, is, that the bleſſing of Almighty God, his grace and influence, will accompany our ſupplications and our labours, and favourably co-operate with our own prudence, firmneſs, and activity.

You, therefore, who animated by the ſpirit of patriotiſm, call devoutly upon the Lord for the proſperity of Britain; be ſtrong, likewiſe, active, and of good courage.

You

You whoſe daily prayers are, *Peace be within our walls and plenteouſneſs within our palaces*, ſee that you hate the thing that is evil. Repent of your paſt ſins, and be careful to maintain good works for the future. Be uniformly religious, but forget not that you are men, living in a ſtate of ſociety:—ſo may we reaſonably hope, that the Almighty will continue, and increaſe, his mercies to our nation; that he will both now and ever hear our cry, and will help us; that he will proſper our extenſive preparations for the war, and conduct them, in his good time, to the great and only end propoſed by them, a ſafe, honourable, and laſting peace.

You who are truly zealous to promote the laſting happineſs of your country, *be uniformly religious:* for both reaſon and experience demonſtrate, that righteouſneſs exalteth a nation to its higheſt pitch of reputation and grandeur; that piety, juſtice, and integrity of manners, are the ornament and ſtability of the throne, and that religion is the chief ſtrength, ſupport and ſecurity, of the civil government. And to produce inſtances in confirmation of theſe important truths, would be to tranſcribe the annals of the world from its nativity to the preſent hour.

But what is the *religion* which has ſo beneficial a tendency, and is accompanied with ſuch ſalutary effects to ſociety? wherein does it conſiſt? whoſe is it? to whom

whom does it belong, and by whom is it to be practiſed?

The public, the community as ſuch, I mean in its aggregate capacity, cannot be religious. It may, indeed, conſtitute an external ſervice, to diſtinguiſh its own mode of divine worſhip from all other forms, and has an undoubted authority to appoint certain rites and ceremonies (as far as thoſe rites and ceremonies are in their own nature indifferent) as ſigns of union, to which all its members may reaſonably be required to conform. Nor will ſuch external modes of worſhip, ſuch rites and ceremonies, be lightly rejected, or wantonly omitted by any perſon, who has a proper regard for the laws and conſtitution of his country.

But this is not the religion, which is here principally intended; it certainly is not the religion, which promotes, exalts, and fixes the true glory and laſting happineſs of a people. For that religion is founded in the underſtanding, and built upon the immoveable principles of faith in God, repentance from evil works, and obedience to the divine laws: That religion groweth out of the heart, and exerts its amiable and extenſive influence in a ſpirit of internal piety and goodneſs, as well as of external devotion; in a ſpirit of frugality, temperance and moderation; in a ſpirit of unanimity, regular ſubordination,

courage and induſtry; in a ſpirit of juſtice, mercy, and univerſal benevolence.

The religion, therefore, which we are here enquiring after, is the religion of individuals, and not of the ſtate, of private perſons, and not of the community. For as there cannot be a whole diſtinct from its parts; ſo, if all the parts are ſound, and perform their ſeveral functions well and as they ought to do, the whole cannot be out of order, but muſt alſo be healthy and vigorous.

The following concluſions, therefore, ſeem to be indiſputable, namely, That private virtues are public benefits: That no man can be a patriot, or real friend to the eſſential intereſts of his country, who blaſphemes the worſhip of his God, and is wholly careleſs and negligent in the practice of his moral and religious duties: And That every man is a patriot, however mean his part, or office, in the community may be, who glorifies God by living ſoberly, righteouſly and piouſly, and by the almoſt irreſiſtible example of a virtuous and religious life comunicates the ſacred flame to others, teaching and encouraging them to become like himſelf virtuous and religious, their own beſt friends, and the trueſt benefactors to their country.

Away

AWAY then with the ill-founded and impious, though too faſhionable, maxim, that private vices are public benefits; that the vices of individuals promote the general good! What! is there no diſtinction in nature between virtue and vice, between religion and irreligion? And can laſting happineſs, either to the community, or to the individual, be the pleaſing conſequence of deſpiſing the dictates of conſcience, and breaking the laws of God and reaſon? Can God Almighty approve of what is evil, as well as of what is good? Or can He be ſuppoſed ſo indifferent to both, as to ſuffer the ſame event to happen to the righteous, and to the wicked? Where then is the reward of obeying the will of God, where is the puniſhment of offending him? But a God without law, without government, and without a tribunal, is no God at all.

IT is indeed impoſſible in the nature of things, that the vices of individuals ſhould produce the general good. Every attribute of the great Creator and Governor of the world, his wiſdom, his juſtice and his goodneſs are concerned (if we may ſay ſo) in the ſubverſion of this deteſtible doctrine. We muſt ſuppoſe even a miracle to be worked for the expreſs encouragement of vice, to imagine that general riot, luxury, ſenſuality, intemperance, and extravagant expence, can poſſibly be favourable, in the laſt event, to the true intereſts of ſociety.

For religious indifference, and a general diſſolution of morals, not only remove the beſt and moſt aſſured foundation of activity, induſtry and courage, which is a well-grounded confidence in God's inſpection and bleſſing; but alſo relax, ſoften and enervate, both the powers of the mind, and the natural vigour of the body. Perſons who have no fixed principles of religion to inform, influence and animate, their conduct, are unſteady in all their ways, and, in fact, of no party, prince, nor nation. Nor can any ſtate or eſtabliſhment, which finds itſelf reduced to the fatal neceſſity of truſting ſuch men to guide its public councils, and direct its fleets and armies, continue long in proſperity and happineſs. The man who has thrown off all ſenſe and regard of the duties owing to his God, and his neighbour, when probed to the bottom, will generally be found ſordid, mean-ſpirited, cowardly, ſelfiſh, and careleſs of his truſt, his friends, his true honour, and his country, notwithſtanding any accidental and momentary appearance to the contrary.

Unhappy community! is there a large majority of thy members, ſuch as have been here deſcribed! men of indolence and pleaſure, rather than of buſineſs; men who look only at their preſent eaſe, gratification and intereſt; men who have thrown off the fear of God, and inſolently ſay within themſelves, *Is there knowledge with the Moſt High?*

*High?* Unhappy community! what haſt thou to expect, in this wretched ſituation, but the voice of faction, diſcontent and ſedition, every where murmuring and complaining in thy tumultuous ſtreets? what haſt Thou to expect but frequent diſappointments abroad, great reſtleſsneſs within thy walls, and continual proneneſs to change? what haſt Thou to expect, but wide-ſpreading corruption in private life, ſtill-increaſing jealouſy, ſuſpicion and diſcord, amongſt thy nobles; waſteful profuſion of the public treaſures, and inconſiſtence and confuſion of councils? till thy civil conſtitution fall, at length, a miſerable victim, either to the open force of thy foreign enemies, or to the artful intrigues of ſome domeſtic tyrant and oppreſſor? A people, who plough and ſow iniquity, can expect to reap nothing, but their own deſtruction.

With great propriety, therefore, and wiſdom, are you called upon as individuals, and exhorted, as diſtinct members of the community, each man to look well to his own ways; to amend what has been amiſs in your paſt conduct; to obey the commandments of the Lord your God hereafter with the moſt unreſerved ſubmiſſion, and to call upon him, who is worthy to be praiſed, in ſpirit and in truth.--------A nation's fate may depend upon your ſpeedy and thorough reformation. But you will do well to remember, that there cannot be a general reformation, unleſs each man takes care

to

to reform himſelf. The loweſt and moſt abject condition of life is no more exempted from the neceſſary taſk of repentance, than the higheſt; nor have the high-born, the rich and noble, any privilege to plead, for not diſcharging this duty, more than the meaneſt of their brethren.

If then you have any true love and affection either for yourſelves, or your poſterity; either for the preſent, or ſucceeding generations; either for that pureſt religion which you profeſs to believe, or for that dear country, whoſe comprehenſive intereſts you appear to have ſo much at heart——— Uſe theſe ſolemn ſeaſons of faſting, prayer and humiliation, as they are intended to be uſed by the high authority, which injoins them, namely, to recollect and examine your ways.——What, upon the honeſt, ſtrict and impartial ſcrutiny, you find to have been right in your paſt behaviour, to have been done in faith, love and obedience, agreeably to the principles and precepts of the Goſpel; That continue to hold faſt, ſtill adding faith to faith, love to love, and obedience to obedience.——What, on the other hand, your conſcience tells you, to have been done contrary to the laws of God, either wilfully and preſumptuouſly, or inadvertently; That ſincerely repent of, pouring out your ſupplications to the Almighty, that he will forgive you your ſins paſt, and aid you with the powerful

erful influence of his Holy Spirit, to lead better lives for the future.

For this is your duty *as Engliſhmen*, ſenſible of the multiplied bleſſings which you enjoy under the Proteſtant eſtabliſhment, and reſolved to maintain and ſupport it, if occaſion require, at the expence of your lives and fortunes.——This is your duty *as Chriſtians*, who believe that you have been redeemed unto eternal life, through the precious blood of the Son of God, and are fully aſſured that a ſincere repentance will be accepted at the Throne of Grace, through the merits of your bleſſed Saviour.——And this alſo is your duty *as Men*, who know that there is a God, the Lawgiver, the King and the Judge of the whole earth, who alone is able to hear and grant your prayers, when you call upon him.

Do this, and you ſhall live! act in this manner with an upright and ſincere conſcience, and you need not be afraid for ten thouſands of your enemies, who have ſet themſelves in array againſt you! act in this manner, and you need not be afraid, though the mountains were removed, and caſt into the midſt of the ſea; though the ſolid pillars of the earth trembled upon their baſes; though the elements were ready to melt with fervent heat, and the ſtars in their courſes to fall

from

from heaven! *For at what inſtant*, ſays God by the mouth of his prophet, *I ſhall ſpeak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to deſtroy it: if that nation, againſt whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil, which I thought to do unto them.*

May this be the happy fate of Britain, of her King and her people! *May the Lord repent of the evil, which He thought to do unto us!* The fate of Britain cannot but be happy, if her ſons will learn righteouſneſs, and live agreeably to the precepts of their holy religion. The fate of Britain cannot but be happy under the auſpicious government of George the Good, if the well-regulated piety of the ſovereign, his uniform and exemplary devotion, his ſound and upright underſtanding, his humane, feeling and benevolent heart, his purity and integrity of manners, untouched amidſt the flames of youth, can ſecure the permanent proſperity and happineſs of a nation.

Oh! may the imperial robe, ſo lately put on, continue to ſit light, eaſy and graceful upon his ſhoulders! may He ever find his ſubjects dutiful, faithful and obedient! may he ſee all his vows fulfilled! He will ſee his moſt ardent vows fulfilled, if he may behold his people flouriſhing in their univerſal commerce; flouriſhing in domeſtic union

union and tranquility; flouriſhing in credit and reputation among foreign nations, and flouriſhing in the practice of virtue and religion, the never-failing ſource of national felicity! May He ſoon put a good end to the juſt and neceſſary, though extremely expenſive war, in which he finds himſelf ſo intricately engaged, and be able to give to his own ſubjects, to his allies, and to Europe, the bleſſing ſo devoutly to be wiſhed, the bleſſing of an honourable, ſafe and durable peace.------May our lateſt poſterity make the long, happy, and glorious reign of GEORGE THE GOOD, the common meaſure of felicitation to all his deſcendants, ſitting upon the throne of theſe kingdoms, till time ſhall be no more.

To theſe petitions for the happineſs of our King, and the peace of our Jeruſalem, is there a Briton, whoſe heart, as well as tongue, does not chearfully ſay, AMEN.

FINIS.

*Lately Publiſhed,*

## By the ſame AUTHOR:

I. INDIFFERENCE FOR RELIGION INEXCUSABLE; or, A ſerious, impartial, and practical Review, of the Certainty, Importance, and Harmony, of Religion, both natural and revealed. The Second Edition.

II. A SERMON preached before his Grace GEORGE Duke of MARLBOROUGH, Preſident, the Vice-Preſidents, the Treaſurer, &c. of the HOSPITAL for the SMALL-POX, on Thurſday, March 27, 1760.

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